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Doug McSchooler | The Associated Press

**DEMONSTRATORS MARCH:** Opponents of Indiana Senate Bill 101, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, march past the Indiana Statehouse en route to Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on April 4, to push for a state law that specifically bars discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **Editorial: Your move, Kokomo**

For years, Martinsville has struggled with a reputation of being a paragon of intolerance and small-mindedness. But with Mayor Phil Deckard's signing earlier this month of an executive order barring discrimination based on

sexual orientation — and a city council proclamation declaring the community open to all — the Morgan County seat is running laps around cities like Kokomo in the tolerance department.

As was reported by our CNHI state reporter Maureen Hayden last week, Republican activist and Martinsville native Brent Kent delivered a petition April 2 with 200 signatories, asking the city to issue a “bold declaration” eschewing this sort of discrimination.

“If Martinsville adopts a human rights ordinance, as expected, it will join a growing number of communities that are moving to create or expand similar laws in the aftermath of the state’s controversial Religious Freedom Restoration Act,” Hayden wrote.

These communities include Muncie, Lafayette and New Albany, with more sure to follow. And it’s not necessarily a partisan idea, either. Mike McDaniel, former state GOP chairman, took to WFYI’s “Indiana Week in Review” April 10 to warn state representatives that if they fail to lead on this, local leaders will push for equality from their end.

“Well, I think what you saw in the last week is just the start of what you’re going to see. I think you’re going to see more and more communities do exactly what they’re doing,” McDaniel said. “I think they’re smart to do it. The ferocity of this thing is such that you’d better get out in front of it. ... I

think that leads to more pressure on the Legislature moving forward, quite frankly.”

This debate isn’t going anywhere. The Legislature punted this for another session with their “fix.” Cities such as Kokomo need to take responsibility and lead where state lawmakers have failed us. We hope the fact this is a municipal election year isn’t inhibiting the mayor and city council from doing what is right.

Leaders in Martinsville and other municipalities have spoken with a clear voice.

Your move, Kokomo.